AUTUMN/WINTER 2004 ISSUE 9

waterfront

Cotswold Canals
update on restoration

This is my patch
Exploring the Kennet & Avon Canal

Ripon Canal
then and now

Historic Buildings
by the water

British Waterways

BRITAIN'S LEADING WATERWAYS MAGAZINE

FIRST with the REAL NEWS

Canal boat AND INLAND WATERWAYS

3 ISSUES FOR JUST £3

Subscribe today and you will receive the next 3 issues of ***Canal Boat*** magazine for **just £3!** That's a saving of over 65% off the newsagent's price! Then if you enjoy your first three issues of Canal Boat - do nothing! Your subscription will be automatically renewed guaranteeing you future savings off the newsagent's price. ***Ordering is easy, just complete & send us the form below, call us or visit us online...***

CANAL BOAT SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

1 ▶ **SUBSCRIPTION DETAILS**

☐ Yes, please send me the next 3 issues of ***Canal Boat*** magazine for just £3.

2 ▶ **YOUR DETAILS**

Mr/Mrs/Ms

Address

Postcode

Telephone Number

▶ **DIRECT DEBIT** (UK ONLY)

DIRECT Debit

INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT

Please return this form to: Canal Boat, Freepost LE6423, Leicester LE87 4BY
Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society.

To the Manager (Bank name)

Address

Postcode

Originator's Identification Number

9 0 9 7 0 8

Ref. No. (to be completed by Canal Boat)

INSTRUCTIONS TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY. Please pay Romsey Publishing Co. Ltd, on behalf of CANAL BOAT, Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction, subject to safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that the instruction may remain with Romsey Publishing Co. Ltd and if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society.

Account in the name of

Branch Sort Code

Bank/Building Society account number

Signature

Date

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account.

You may cancel your subscription order at any time. Unless you cancel, your subscription will continue automatically at the special rate of just £14.75 per 6 issues - that's like getting one issue free!

BY POST: Canal Boat, FREEPOST LE6423, Leicester LE87 4BY, UK (no stamp required if posted in the UK)
BY PHONE: 01858 438 835 (Please quote code WF04)
ONLINE: www.subscription.co.uk/canalboat/WF04

Please tick the box if you do not wish to receive information about this magazine and other products from Romsey Publishing Company ☐ and other carefully selected companies ☐

SAVE OVER £5

EACH ISSUE

- In depth monthly boat tests
- Latest developments in waterways policy
- Restoration & redevelopment schemes
- Reopening, show reports & stoppages
- Hundreds of Boats for sale every issue
- Wildlife of the waterways

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Autumn is now well upon us and it seems an age since the successful summer season of waterway festivals, shows and rallies. In Scotland the second Scottish Boat Show, based at the Falkirk Wheel, proved a real hit with visitors and traders. If boat shows are your thing then you'll be pleased to see the special Schroders London Boat Show offer on page 5, there's a great discount to this huge boating spectacular which will see the return of the Inland Waterways Feature to ExCeL in London's Docklands in January.

Just because it's getting colder outside doesn't mean that you have to stay indoors. If getting out on the waterways is on your agenda, you'll be interested in two recently opened BW visitor sites at Fradley and Torksey, highlighted on page 6.

They say there's no such thing as a free lunch. Well it seems there is, if you have a four-legged friend! On page 4 we've teamed up with Oscar Pet Foods to offer *Waterfront* readers' dogs a free meal.

Looking to the future BW has received great news about funding for two waterway restoration projects, the Cotswold Canals (see our article on page 12) and the Droitwich Canal. This great news means that we'll soon have even more waterways to enjoy!

Gillian Owen
Editor

CONTENTS

Regulars

2 **Up Front**
News in Brief

8 **Then and Now**
Ripon Canal

14 **Just Ask... About Funding**
We put the questions you're asking to the right people

16 **A Day in the Life of a Visitor Mooring**
Birmingham

18 **This is my Patch**
The Kennet & Avon Canal

22 **Shortcuts**
Meet the people you'll meet on the bank

24 **Letters Page**
Have your say

Features

6 **Sites to be Seen**
New BW visitor centres to explore

10 **Residential Boat Owners' Association**
Who are they and what do they do?

12 **Cotswold Canals**
An update on the restoration project

20 **A Whole Host of Heritage**
Historic buildings by the water

waterfront

Editor: Gillian Owen
Feature Writers: Becky Mutlow, Hannah Kitchener
Managing Editor: Nicky Ross
Design & Production: Ecoutez Limited
Print: Alpine Press Limited
Advertising Contact: Gillian Owen
General Enquiries:
BW Customer Service Centre,
Willow Grange, Church Road, Watford WD17 4QA
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 1923 201120
Fax: +44 (0) 1923 201300
Email: waterfront@britishwaterways.co.uk
Website: www.britishwaterways.co.uk

Front cover picture: Lapworth, Grand Union Canal

The pulp used in the manufacture of this paper is from renewable timber produced on a fully sustainable basis.

The pulp used in the manufacture of this paper is bleached without the use of chlorine gas. (ECF – Elemental Chlorine Free).

This paper is suitable for recycling.

All rights reserved. Reproduction or use in any form or by any means either wholly or in part of this magazine without permission from the Editor is strictly prohibited.

Every care has been taken in compiling the contents of this magazine. However, any individual or organisations making use of information from this magazine does so at their own risk and British Waterways and its representatives take no responsibility for any loss, damage or actions of any kind arising from such use.

While we do our very best to ensure that firms and organisations mentioned and/or advertised are reputable, British Waterways and its representatives can give no guarantee that they will fulfil their obligations under all circumstances. The views expressed are not necessarily those of British Waterways.

Up Front News in Brief

NEW BW BOARD MEMBER

Alun Michael, Waterways Minister, has appointed Richard Bowker, pictured above, as a part-time non-executive member of the Board of BW.

Richard has a life long interest in the inland waterways and regularly travels on his narrowboat. He has considerable knowledge and practical experience of transport policy and delivery, and the work of public and private bodies. Since 2001, he has been Chair and Chief Executive of the Strategic Rail Authority. On leaving the SRA this September he will have successfully rescued major railway projects notably the £7.5 billion modernising of the West Coast Main Line.

BW ANNUAL MEETING

This year's BW Annual Meeting took place at the Institution of Civil Engineers on 16 September. 110 people attended, and the speeches and attendee list is available on BW's website: www.britishwaterways.co.uk/annual_meeting

WINTER OPENING HOURS

The Winter Opening Hours are now available as a booklet, downloadable from waterscape.com or available as a hard copy from BW's Customer Service Centre on 01923 201120 or at enquiries.hq@britishwaterways.co.uk

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Managing vegetation is a hot topic at the moment. Feedback from user groups, as well as individual boaters, has prompted BW to look at the way it manages vegetation. It has already put plans in place to cut the whole of the 2,000-mile network in full before the end of March 2005. At the same time BW is looking at its budgets to make sure money is available to manage vegetation better in the future.

BW AT BRAUNSTON

Following the closure of BW's Braunston office on the Grand Union Canal, and the disappointment it caused many people, BW has taken another look at its presence in the area. As a consequence, some local waterway supervisors and two patrol officers will be located at Braunston, whilst other supervisors and patrol officers will be located at Bulbourne workshop site. The Stop House will provide information for customers under limited opening arrangements this winter, (Friday 10am – 4pm) from 5 November until March 2005, when we will review the best arrangements for our customers. A mobile information centre, which was piloted in September and October, will continue in 2005. Visit Waterscape.com for detailed opening times, dates and locations.

NEW CUSTOMER FACILITY AT LLANGOLLEN

A brand new 32-berth mooring basin opened on the Llangollen Canal this August, offering new water and electric supplies. Visitors will be able to stay for up to 48 hours, with the site operating on a pay and display basis.

The project, funded by BW, the Welsh Development Agency, the Welsh European Funding Office, Adfywio and Denbighshire County Council, involved digging out 1.5 acres of canal and field.

Boaters making short stays of less than four hours and leaving before 4pm will be free of charge, subject to availability. Other visits will be charged at £5 per day. All boats will need to obtain a ticket from the BW customer services assistant at the information point by the Facilities Block on the linear moorings, east of Llangollen town centre.

A' LEVEL BOAT MANAGEMENT TRAINING

The National Community Boats Association has been given the go-ahead from the Open College Network (OCN) to offer Community Boat Management students the opportunity to receive a qualification accredited at the same standard as an 'A' level qualification.

The aim of the course is to give operators of boats on non-tidal waterways training in boat handling, boat maintenance and the management of group safety and welfare, and anyone over 17 can obtain the certificate. The National Community Boats Association, a national waterways charity, promoting quality training and support for voluntary and local authority projects, recommends that course attendees will have some experience of working with groups, as well as practical boat handling.

The National Community Boats Association currently has 33 Accredited Training Centres, covering Scotland, England and Wales. They can be contacted at 02476 397 400 or by emailing staff@national-cba.co.uk or visit www.national-cba.co.uk/course for further information.

ELECTRIC POWER FOR BW BOAT

You may have seen a 57ft narrowboat either cruising the system or on the BBC Breakfast programme this summer, branded waterscape.com. It is BW's inspection launch which runs on both diesel and electric power.

The Thames Electric Launch Company's Selectric system was chosen for this boat. This comprises 43hp diesel engine, driving a conventional shaft and propeller, plus an 8kW Lynch electric motor, driving the same shaft through a system of belts and clutches. The Lynch motor is powered by a bank of Chloride Motive Power Gel Traction batteries.

This system allows the boat to travel silently under non-polluting electric power, but retains the diesel engine in reserve for extra power, or extended cruising where shore-based recharging points are not available. Changing from electric to diesel power is done by turning a switch, the electric can also be powered from the diesel.

The batteries power the cooking equipment, as well as the audio and visual equipment for when presentations need to be made onboard.

For more information contact: The Thames Electric Launch Co, PO Box 3, Goring-on-Thames, Berks. RG8 0HQ. phone 01491 873126 or fax 01491 872217
Email: thameselectric@goring.co.uk. www.thameselectric.com.

'TAILOR-MADE' STOPPAGE INFORMATION

This year, for the first time BW is offering boaters the chance to request winter maintenance stoppage information tailor-made for their own journey needs via www.waterscape.com.

BW's winter 2004/05 stoppage programme was published on www.waterscape.com/boating at the end of August. The full list for all BW run waterways is downloadable as a PDF, CSV or Excel file. People can also search and download stoppages for individual waterways and further refine their search by date. Waterway users can also subscribe to an email alert service providing stoppage updates for individual waterways and waterway closure information can also be accessed using WAP mobile phone technology.

Printed copies of the stoppage programme can also be ordered from BW offices or BW's Customer Service Centre by emailing enquiries.hq@britishwaterways.co.uk, phoning 01923 201120, faxing 01923 201300 or boaters can write to British Waterways Customer Service Centre, Willow Grange, Church Road, Watford, WD17 4QA, including their name, address and customer number.

Arrangements for notifying customers about emergency stoppages remain the same. Waterscape.com and Canalphone (north 01923 201401; south 01923 201402) will be kept up-to-date and local offices will continue to send stoppage notifications to their normal mailing lists.

BW CALENDAR 2005

Why not start your Christmas shopping early or simply treat yourself with this *Waterfront* reader offer? The BW calendar is a great gift or stocking filler for anyone who is interested in the inland waterways, or simply enjoys beautiful and tranquil scenery. The calendar includes images from across the network, providing a year-round view of the waterways.

The calendar retails at £5.99 (including postage & packing in the UK) but if you quote '*Waterfront* reader offer' the calendar will only cost £4.50 (including postage & packing in the UK). To order a copy of the BW Calendar 2005 please contact Customer Service Centre by phoning 01923 201120 or email enquiries.hq@britishwaterways.co.uk

BW'S CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE

Just a reminder that BW's Customer Service Centre is open Mon-Fri 8am-8pm and Sat 9am-1pm. When you phone 01923 201120 or email enquiries.hq@britishwaterways.co.uk, you will normally be greeted by Jean, Jenny or Hannah, who will be happy to help you. Read more about Jean on page 23.

NEW GENERAL MANAGER APPOINTED FOR SOUTH EAST

BW has announced Jerry Appleyard as its new general manager for its South East Waterway Unit. Jerry took up the post, based in Milton Keynes, in September this year. Jerry has been with the Welcome Break Group in a number of roles since 1993, including marketing and hotels director.

USER GROUP MEETINGS ON THE WEB

Details of forthcoming User Group Meetings, as well as notes from previous meetings, can be found on BW's website, www.britishwaterways.co.uk, under the Accountability section. BW Board Minutes are also published on this section of the site.

AND THE WINNERS ARE ...SASH AND SMUDGY

As part of BW's campaign to reduce dog fouling on towpaths, we published a competition to win a year's supply of free dog food in the spring/summer edition, in association with Oscar Pet Foods.

BW is in the process of installing 1,000 bins, and a competition winner has been selected. Denise Poole, from Northwich, Cheshire, has won a year's supply of Oscar Pet Food. Her dogs, Sash and Smudgy, can now fill up on Oscar Pet Foods' hypoallergenic, gluten-free meals before a brisk walk along the canal.

And to top it off *Waterfront* and Oscar Pet Foods are offering all reader's pets a chance to try a FREE MEAL, simply call 0800 195 8000 and quote '*Waterfront*'.

Denise Poole with Smudgy, her Jack Russell puppy, and her cross-breed Sash

BW'S EMERGENCY NUMBER

Emergencies happen, especially when you have a 2,000-mile, 200-year-old, waterway network. If the canal has breached, a boat is sinking or a wall has collapsed or anything else that needs an urgent response, then you need to call BW's emergency number 0800 47 999 47, but only in an emergency.

BW recently carried out an emergency exercise on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal, putting the South West Waterways team to the test. Leaping into action, the team managed to secure water supplies within just an hour of a serious breach being declared on 19 August.

Duty supervisor Mark Abraham received a 'mock' call from the BW emergency line, 0800 47 999 47, at 5am. He was told that a dog walker had seen water gushing through the sea wall, into the Severn estuary. The loss of water would have had serious implications for the supply of drinking water to Bristol Water.

The duty team was alerted and closed the stop gates and planks within 53 minutes of the call. They notified Keith Badsey, duty harbour master, Sharpness Docks. Keith put emergency measures into action at the port.

Operations manager John Laverick was delighted with the team, saying "None of the team knew that this was going to happen and I have every reason to be confident about their ability to respond to a future emergency." **0800 47 999 47 is operated 24-hours, 7 days a week.**

HARRISON FORD ON THE CUT!

Hollywood star, Harrison Ford, was spotted on a narrowboat on the Llangollen Canal this summer. He was with his partner, Calista Flockhart, of Ali McBeal fame, and her son Liam.

REPORTING VISITOR INCIDENTS

BW is aware that incidents and accidents involving members of the public sometimes happen when they are not on site and, consequently, are not reported. When an incident does occur it's very important for BW to find out as much as possible, as soon as possible, to help it to continue to keep waterways safe.

Visitor incident report forms, which allow members of the public to report any incident (including anti-social behaviour), accident or 'near miss' are available from BW offices, bank staff, and lock keepers, britishwaterways.co.uk, as well as boat hire companies and other waterside businesses.

The information given on the report forms will help BW understand better what incidents are occurring, investigate the cause of the problem and, where appropriate, minimise the risk of it happening again. On completion, the form should be returned to the BW safety team by Freepost.

TOP LAWYER APPOINTED TO HEAD UP OPENNESS COMMITTEES FOR BW

Professor Jowell, a leading member of the Bar, has been appointed to take forward BW's proposals to reform and improve its accountability as a public corporation.

Professor Jowell is Professor of Public Law at University College London and has a distinguished career. He will chair the Waterway Ombudsman Committee, which will oversee the operation of the Ombudsman Scheme to ensure it is working independently and effectively. The Committee's role will be to see that oversight of the scheme is at arms-length of BW and the independence of the Ombudsman is protected and preserved. It will comprise representatives of waterway user groups, a number of non-aligned members and a minority BW representation.

Professor Jowell will have a further role in ensuring greater openness and accountability for BW as Chair of the Inauguration Committee of the National Consultative Council (NCC). This is being established to prepare a draft constitution and Terms of Reference for the NCC, which will be representative of all significant waterways user groups. These groups will have access to BW's board members and senior management to raise any serious issue of concern at the highest level.

SPECIAL OFFER
£3 OFF ADULT TICKETS

Schroders LONDON BOAT SHOW
6th – 16th JANUARY 2005 at ExCeL
in association with
The Daily Telegraph

The Inland Waterways Feature is back by popular demand at the Schroders London Boat Show 2005. The show is returning to ExCeL in London's docklands and will run from the 6th –16th January 2005. Once again the feature will bring you plenty of boats to explore, a waterside pub to relax in and lots of opportunities to find out more information about the UK's inland waterway network. This special offer means that you can enjoy the show for less.

To claim £3 off the standard adult ticket price (£14) for the Schroders London Boat Show 2005 simply call the ticket hotline 0870 060 0246 and quote '*Waterfront*'.
To claim this offer tickets must be bought in advance.
*this offer is not available on Press & Preview Day (Thursday 6 January 2005).
www.schroderslondonboatshow.com

SITES TO BE SEEN

There are two new sites on the BW network which are ready and waiting to be explored. With crisp autumn days to take advantage of, why not take a trip to visit them?

Fradley Junction, where the Trent & Mersey and Coventry canals meet, has always been an interesting spot on the waterways. And now the opening of the Fradley Pool Nature Reserve has added an extra attraction to this historical site.

The proposal to build a canal from the Trent to the Mersey came from the famous potter Josiah Wedgewood. Starting in 1766, it took 11 years to dig five tunnels and complete the length of the canal. The Coventry Canal took even longer, and due to financial constraints was halted, with completion to Fradley only made possible by the intervention of the Birmingham & Fazeley and Trent & Mersey canal companies.

Fradley Pool Nature Reserve is another by-product of the creation of the canals. With water seen as the most vital asset of a canal company, the Trent & Mersey Canal Company did not want to lose any of their excess water, and especially not to their competitors the Coventry Canal. To combat this they set up a system to hold the overflow water which resulted in the building of a reservoir in the 1780s. It's this reservoir that has now been opened to the public as a fantastic wildlife site. The site is classified as a Site of Biological Importance, and holds a range of important wildlife habitats from dead wood to floral areas and shallow waters. With tree sculptures, pond dipping platforms and a fantastic new bird hide you really can get back to nature at Fradley. For inquisitive minds there is the Fradley Pool Nature Detectives Pack to help you get the most out of your visit to this hidden waterway treasure, and the site is fully accessible to wheelchair users as well as prams and buggies.

The Detectives Pack can be picked up from the BW Information Centre that's housed in the original wharf buildings. At the centre you can find out more waterways information, browse the gifts or even buy your BW licence and find out about moorings. For out of hours service, use the touch-screen information point for details of boating and other user facilities, local attractions, waterway leisure activities and much more. And with a café planned to open in Spring 2005 soon there'll be even more to entice you to this historical and environmental haven.

The bird hide at Fradley Pool Nature Reserve

If you find history interesting then you'll probably already know something about the Fossdyke Navigation. Originally a Roman navigation dating back to AD 120, and deepened by Henry I in 1121. Torksey Lock, which links the River Trent to the Fossdyke Navigation is the gateway to the waterways of Lincolnshire and now there is a new BW visitor interpretation centre, which opened in September.

The centre has display panels with various themes, including 'Torksey through the Ages', 'Local History', 'Water for Life', 'Wild Waterways', plus an interactive fully operational working model of Torksey Lock, complete with water. Part of the charm of Torksey is the surroundings, and with new outside seating it means that there's a comfortable place to watch the visiting boats, and the wildlife. A new nesting box with a colour camera installed inside has been linked to a monitor so that visitors can really see what's happening up close and personal in the lives of their feathered friends.

If you want more information about these visitor centres, including opening times, or inspiration for other days out by the water, use Waterscape.com to help plan your day.

Inside Torksey Visitor Centre

THEN AND NOW

RIPON

Ripon, North Yorkshire, is one of England's smallest cities. Dating back to the seventh century Ripon offers a wealth of heritage and time honoured tradition. Ripon is home to award winning spa gardens, a 1300 year old Cathedral and the regenerated Ripon Canal.

New wharf development, Ripon Top: Bell Furrows Lock in 1983 (courtesy of Richard Willis, Ripon Canal Society)

Left: A Yorkshire Keel on the Ripon Canal, 1964, (courtesy of BW archive/The Waterways Trust/The Arthur Watts Collection Right: The Lock House, Ripon Canal

SMALL BUT PERFECTLY FORMED...

Until recently, the Ripon Canal was the most northerly navigable canal in England, and is a mere two and a quarter miles long. It was the brainchild of engineer John Smeaton who wanted to improve navigation on the River Ure and make freight carriage cheaper. He proposed a five lock structure on the eight miles of the River Ure and the two and a quarter miles on the Ripon Canal itself. With these proposals Ripon Canal could meet the increasing demands of the industrial revolution.

Engineer, John Smith carried out the works, including the country's first cast iron bridge built over the canal to carry the Great North Road at Boroughbridge. In 1773 the canal was opened carrying flax for the Knaresborough linen industry as well as timber, coal, butter and cheese. The Ripon Canal maybe small by nature, but it was a vital link to the city – a lifeline for trade and industry.

R.I.P.ON CANAL

The honeymoon period for the Ripon Canal soon elapsed. By the 1840's the birth of steam and subsequently the railways, made Ripon Canal a distant memory. With powerful engines offering a fast and efficient service, the Great Northern Railway was in full steam ahead for transporting raw materials and goods to industries across the country. By 1956 the British Transport Commission obtained a Royal Assent to abandon the canal. Smeaton's creation was obsolete.

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

In the eyes of industry, the Ripon Canal was forgotten – it was of no use to them, and it was left to become derelict. This however, was not a unanimous point of view. The Ripon Canal Society, founded by Richard Willis believed the canal should be fully navigable and enjoyed by all. Thanks to their efforts and BW's co-operation, the canal was reopened for navigation as far as Littlethorpe Road Bridge in 1986.

RIPON REVIVAL

Ten years later in 1996, with the assistance of the devoted Ripon Canal Society, local authorities and funding from English Partnerships, the last quarter mile of the canal was restored and reopened for navigation right through the centre of Ripon. The improved access, combined with the investment for towpaths, fishing platforms, bird hides and a sanitary station, has helped the area to become a haven for visitors. "One of the biggest attractions," states waterway operative, Julie Freytag who has worked on the Ripon Canal for 12 years, "is the sheer variety of the canal. At one end is tranquil countryside, and the other Ripon town centre. The beauty and diversity is quite remarkable."

Thanks to the publicity from external investment (English Partnerships and Ripon Regeneration), Ripon Canal's visitor numbers are growing year on year. From narrowboats, to bird watchers, the peacefulness and natural beauty draws in all walks of life. Supervisor Martin Walton says "There are a lot more walkers here now, especially the older generation, as the canal is not too long, and there are plenty of short routes or detours visitors can take through the pretty villages."

RIPON RACECOURSE MARINA

As part of new developments, a Marina was also built from dis-used quarry land, "there was much doubt of the marina's success," says Julie Freytag, "being so out of the way." However, being one of the most northerly navigable canal in England has had its advantages, "we soon saw people from all over…Newcastle, Teeside, Middlesborough, it was ideal for them, they could moor their boat relatively close to home." There has also been the recent addition of the Smeaton Information Centre named after the very engineer who created the Ripon Canal.

RIPON EVER AFTER

The Ripon Canal has experienced a whole magnitude of roles throughout its life. From an industry lifeline in the 1700s, to a derelict site in the 1950s. And now today, thanks to investment and continuous support, Ripon has a fresh rejuvenated canal, offering an environment of beauty and tranquillity to host a whole new world of leisure.

If you would like more information on the Ripon Canal, please visit www.waterscape.com or www.riponcity.info

RBOA

Residential Boat Owners' Association –

HOME IS WHERE MY BOAT IS!

If you dream about waking to the gentle sounds of nature or are searching for a better quality of life, living afloat could be for you…but you need to make sure you do your homework! That's where the Residential Boat Owners' Association (RBOA) comes in, this organisation can help you see a true picture of year-round life on the water.

Waterfront's Hannah Kitchener spoke to both the chairman of RBOA, Ivor Caplan and vice chair, Beryl McDowall at the IWA National Festival, during the August Bank Holiday weekend to find out more.

Founded in 1963, the Association is a voluntary organisation, formed to represent people living afloat on canals, rivers, lakes and coastal estuaries in Britain. "Everywhere where you can have a boat really," Beryl explains, "the organisation has a wide remit in terms of the range of boats, members and waterways it covers."

The Association sees itself as a national watchdog, safeguarding and protecting the interests of its members. It takes a pro-active stance in every aspect of its work. From investigating areas of confusion for live-aboards, such as council tax, to acting as an advisor, giving guidance on setting up and managing new residential moorings.

IN THE BEGINNING

The Association was established by a group of boat-owners around D'Oyly Carte Island on the Thames, who got together to negotiate with the owner of their moorings. Ivor explains, "It started off as small groups of people who were really fighting for their own issues, regarding their own moorings. But over the years we have become a far bigger organisation, and we like to think we have an overall interest, not just in residential issues, but everything that affects the waterways."

Beryl adds, "last year we celebrated our 40th Anniversary, holding our Annual General Meeting back down in Kingston near where the organisation was founded."

The Association count their members in terms of boats, rather than individual people. It can be quite difficult to keep in touch with members. Ivor explains "people do move about a lot, and because we are quite a mobile population, we try to ensure that members update us with their contact details."

Members come from a broad section of society, age ranges, and backgrounds. Some cruise continuously, some are permanently moored and others mix the two. Each has a different reason to live afloat. Predominately, members are based in this country, however Ivor tells me, "we do have overseas members who boat here, we just had one member join today who's from New Zealand!"

Another aspect of their work promotes the benefits to planning and waterway authorities of living aboard a boat. A recent development has been the formation of a 'Residential Boating Issues Group'. This group, funded by Defra and involving all navigation authorities (through AINA), along with organisations such as the Royal Town Planning Institute, is studying how the needs of navigation authorities and boaters can be met now and in the future.

Ivor explains, "RBIG is aiming to publish a Best Practice guide as a result of this collaboration, for example, guidance for the development and running of moorings." He continues "One thing we are very keen

Committee members at the Annual Meeting (courtesy of Beryl McDowall)

to publicise is the benefit of residential moorings, particularly in urban and regeneration areas. A sense of community and security for other waterway users is one direct benefit of such arrangements."

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

One of the potential problems with living on a boat is the difficulty in communicating with members who are spread around the country. Ivor describes the various methods the association uses to keep in touch and update its members. "The committee has monthly meetings which deliberately move around the country and have an open session for local members to come along."

He continues "Annual Meetings are an opportunity for members to talk to us." On 21 August this year the Association met at Alrewas, and invited Eugene Baston, BW Customer Relations Manager as guest speaker." Beryl adds, "this year we had a very good attendance."

Ivor continues "we also go to events like this one and the Crick Boat Show. The stand is an opportunity for our members to come along and talk to us about the issues they have, as well as recruiting new members."

At the IWA National Festival the RBOA judge their annual competition. The 'Cressy Award' first started in 1989 at Waltham Abbey. It is named after Tom Rolts' famous residential narrowboat. The judge's choice for this year's 'designed for living' competition was Peter & jenny Copeland with narrowboat 'That's Jazz', a 68'ft boat, fitted out with an art deco theme. The pictures on this page show the winning boat.

They also have a monthly publication 'Soundings'. "Through this we can tell our members what is happening on the waterways and issues we're discussing. For instance, the five year review of BW by Defra. We submitted a response, and the magazine provided an opportunity for us to get feedback from members. We don't want to feel we are just a committee that is responding, we want to get our members views so we are genuinely representative of our membership."

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The organisation has concerns over the number of people who are thinking about living on boats due to the high media profile. Ivor explains "we are of course happy to help, but we are worried about some people that come on to boats without having all the proper knowledge. So we see our job as encouraging and helping people, but also want to make sure they are aware of the issues, not just the good side, there are problems as well."

To help address this issue the RBOA have produced a joint leaflet with BW and the Environment Agency called 'So you want to live on a boat?'. This leaflet answers initial questions and has a useful checklist of things you need to consider. Beryl explains "the aim of the leaflet is to try and get people to think of some of the issues they've got to consider before going any further. Sometimes we get people who have come to us, who have bought a boat to live on and say what do I do now? What we're trying to say is, that isn't were you start from, you need to do a lot of research first before you commit yourself to buying a boat."

Ivor adds, "When people become more interested we would recommend 'Living Afloat' which is written by live-aboard boaters and is probably the most authoritative introductory book available." It is priced £8.50 (incl P&P) and is available from the RBOA at the address below.

WHY JOIN?

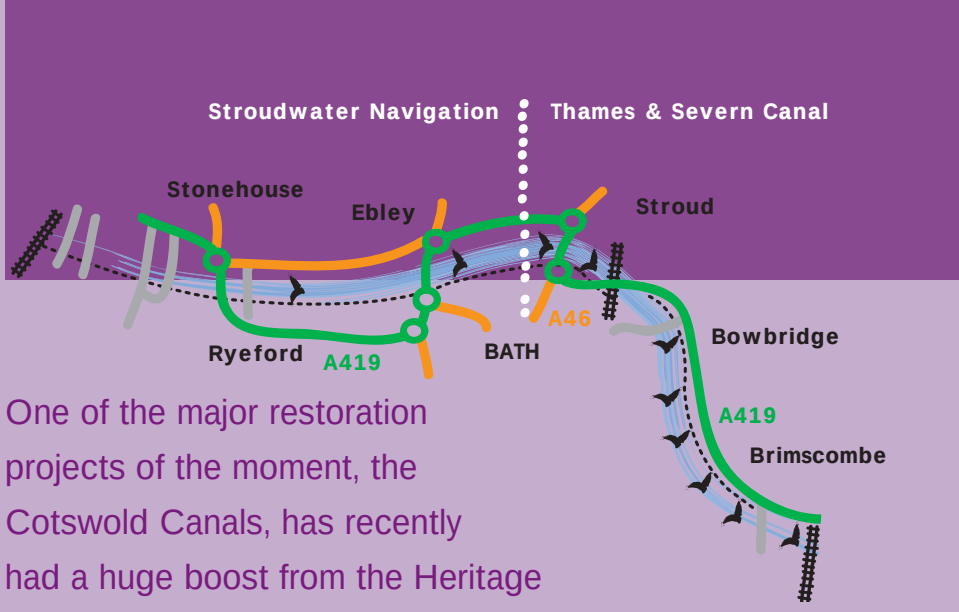
You don't have to live afloat to become a member, it is open to anyone who supports the aims of the Association. There are four annual subscription types starting with Full Membership at £15 per boat.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like more information about the RBOA please contact:
Residential Boat Owners' Association
PO Box No. 518
Rickmansworth. WD3 1WJ
www.rboa.org.uk

(All photos courtesy of Ivor Caplan)

COTSWOLD CANALS reviving the memory, restoring the dream



One of the major restoration projects of the moment, the Cotswold Canals, has recently had a huge boost from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), in the form of an earmarked £11.3 million grant.

The Cotswold Canals comprise the 29-mile Thames & Severn Canal and the seven-mile Stroudwater Navigation. Originally opened in 1789 the navigations were built to provide a passenger service between Gloucester and London. They provided much more than a functional service, often noted as being a beautifully scenic and tranquil waterway enjoyed by many. However the Cotswold Canals constantly endured problems, this, combined with the advent of the railway, ensured its life was short lived. After unsuccessful attempts from Gloucester County Council to revive these navigations, they were finally abandoned in 1933. Today, BW, and other organisations that make up the Cotswold Canals Partnership, are working together to revive the canals and are celebrating the HLF's decision to back the project.

Money Money Money

In July 2004 the HLF gave a Stage One Pass for an £11.3 million grant towards Phase One of the restoration of the Cotswold Canals. 'Phase One' is the six-mile stretch of waterway from Stonehouse on the Stroudwater Navigation in the west, to Brimscombe Port on the Thames & Severn Canal in the east. Although this stretch doesn't connect to the rest of the network, it's been chosen because it brings the maximum benefits to local communities. The ultimate aim is still to restore the full 36 miles that make up the Cotswold Canals, and the next stage will be to connect the four-mile stretch back to the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal.

"After campaigning for over 30 years, the 4,600 members of the Cotswold Canals Trust and 26,000 petitioners will be delighted that the dream of restoration is a step closer. There really is enormous enthusiasm and support for the project, both locally and across the country."

Bruce Hall MBE, chairman, Cotswold Canals Trust

A Stage One Pass means that the HLF has earmarked these funds for the project. The next stage of the project is for BW to progress to Stage Two and submit a further, fully developed application. This will secure the full £11.3 million grant. BW hopes that the Stage Two Pass will be given in around a year's time – this means that work could start as early as January 2006.

The Cotswold Canals Partnership

Ryeford, The Stroudwater Navigation, Cotswold Canals

"People love canals and the restoration of this waterway will enable an important part of the local heritage to become living history. This beautiful stretch of historic water could play a significant role for the local community by attracting visitors, creating employment and encouraging healthy living."

Carole Souter, director of the Heritage Lottery Fund

Since it was first established, the HLF has received nearly 25,000* applications for funding, so to receive a Stage One Pass is an enormous achievement and an indication of the positive support from the HLF!

A Whole New Wold

It's clear that the Cotswolds project will touch the lives of many. Now with the Stage One Pass, the country's most picturesque canals are one step closer to being bought back to life, bringing a whole host of benefits to the area. It will help the economy and provide local jobs, improve the community's quality of life and attract new visitors to the area who will experience the beauty and tranquillity of the restored waterway. It will also give a boost to the remaining 30 miles of the Cotswold Canals, creating another cruising ring and reinstating another piece of the inland waterways jigsaw.

The Cotswold Canals Project will:

- conserve 30 historic structures
- create new wildlife habitats, helping to protect rare species, including bats, water voles and native crayfish
- lead to the direct regeneration of 59 hectares of brownfield land, including 19 hectares of canal
- create a 10-mile multi-user trail for walkers, anglers, cyclists, wheelchair users and pushchairs
- facilitate 50 education and interpretation projects, including heritage skills training
- create over 900 permanent jobs by 2020
- attract over 215,000 extra visitor days a year by 2014

BW says it is extremely proud to be a part of the Cotswold Canals Project, and this is just one of many restoration schemes that it is involved in. It's an important part of its vision to develop the waterways for all to enjoy.

Chalford Roundhouse, one of five unusual structures along the line of the Thames & Severn Canal

For more information visit:
www.cotswoldcanals.com
www.britishwaterways.co.uk

*Figures dated to July 2004

JUST ASK...
About Funding

The European Union is shaping every aspect of our lives whether we like it or not. But did you know it brings millions of pounds (or Euros) into this country that directly benefit our waterways? Let's find out more...

As economic development manager, Glenn Millar is responsible for economic analysis and providing support for securing external funding bids. He also manages major European funded projects. He has worked for BW in various roles for over 25 years, including freight transport, and leisure & commercial research.

Contrary to popular belief, he doesn't head up a swing band in his spare time! In fact he's a bit of a traveller, he enjoys the relaxing tranquillity of waterway holidays, but also has been known to go a little further afield. *Waterfront's* Hannah Kitchener managed to catch up with him to find out about funding sources as he returns from his latest adventure - walking in Mongolia.

Part of the Canal Link project along the Telemark Canal in Norway.

Glenn Millar speaking at the National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff

? You're the economic development manager, tell us what that means?

The main bit of my job involves providing support for the funding that BW gets from external sources such as Europe or the National Lottery.

Part of my role is to support funding bids by compiling economic justifications for doing the project and background information to support applications. In particular, I am heavily involved with the teams managing the big restoration schemes, which are very dependent upon this type of funding. Another growing part of my job involves the management of European partnerships, particularly through the INTERREG programmes. This calls for a different set of expertise and added management complications across not only BW administrative divisions but national boundaries.

? How and where do you get funding?

All sorts! In recent years, the National Lottery has been the most important funding source, certainly in terms of amount, particularly for restorations. However other sources are also important, such as the EU and grants from the various British regional development organisations.

? And what is the INTERREG programme?

It's a European funding programme aimed at strengthening economic and social co-operation in Europe. It involves organisations in various countries coming together to develop and deliver projects.

? How long has BW been tapping into these funds?

The first I can recall was the upgrading of the Sheffield & South Yorkshire Navigation for freight traffic which was funded through the EU in the early 1980s.

? What projects can be funded?

Each funding source has its own criteria. You can't get money to do whatever you want. It has to meet the objectives of the fund. This could be an economic objective in terms of jobs or have environmental or cultural heritage criteria. BW can't fund activities from these sources if they are deemed to be our statutory duty, for example, dredging or bank maintenance, we can only get funding for something which is classed as 'extra'.

Above: Clachnaharry, Caledonian Canal. Improvements to the visitor welcome. (courtesy of Christine Spreiter)

I to r: Thrond Kjellevold, Advisor, Telemark County Council; Ragnar Nilssen, Advisor, Telemark County Council; Nicolaas A.W. van Lamsweerde, Director, represents the canals in the Netherlands with Glenn Millar. (courtesy of Tom Erik Holland, Telemarksavisa Newspaper)

How do you prioritise the projects you put bids in for?

It's really a balancing act, between what the funding source is looking for and BW's business plan. It's like a screening process when you try to link the two.

There is also a further complication. You don't always get 100% funding for projects. What is known as 'match-funding' is often required. In this case you have to find the remaining money from your own budget or other third party funding sources. This is a key skill in building what they call a 'funding cocktail' from a number of different sources, which may have different objectives.

What are the benefits of working in partnership with other countries?

We have to work in partnership to get funding in the first place but there are real benefits to working with other countries. Firstly, learning what other countries are doing on their waterways - sharing expertise & techniques. Secondly, developing common solutions to issues and problems. Thirdly, the drive behind it all is to raise the profile of the international network of recreational canals, rivers and lakes in Europe.

How much money has been retained in the UK?

It's difficult to quantify in terms of external funding in general, but in terms of INTERREG and other trans-national programmes, £7.5m has come to us over the last four or five years. Of the £7.5m some of the money goes out to the partners, but about half of it will be spent on the waterways in Britain. Quite a lot of work would not have been possible without this money.

And what benefits have they given boaters?

Many things. They can be divided into three categories. Facilities for users, for example, moorings on the Forth & Clyde Canal and a facilities block at Falkirk. Restorations, for example, supporting the Montgomery, Monmouthshire & Brecon, Cotswold and Lowlands canals, and Bugworth Basin schemes. And publicity, promotion and site interpretation to encourage use and support for the network for example a guide to boating on the Lowlands canals.

Tell me about the TRUST (Transformation of Rural and Urban Spatial Structures) project?

BW is one of five organisations successful in securing EU funding towards five ground-breaking water management projects across Northern Europe. BW's four-year £700,000 project will receive £350,000 of INTERREG funding based in the Stroud area on part of the Cotswold Canals. See page 12 for more details.

Tell me more about the CANAL LINK project?

Under the leadership of BW, this project is being carried out by eight partners from Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Britain. The project aims to develop new boating links and encourage the expansion of businesses along the waterways. For BW this includes £0.9m worth of projects over three years on the Caledonian, Crinan, Lowlands and Leeds & Liverpool canals.

And the CROSS CUT project?

Again, this project is under the leadership of BW and is being carried out by eight partners from Belgium, Ireland, Netherlands and Britain. The focus of Cross Cut is restoring canals to navigation. For Britain this includes £2.2m funding opportunities over three years on the Montgomery, Monmouthshire & Brecon, Grand Western and Bude canals in South West England.

What is the future for European funding?

We know that after 2006, EU funding regimes will change. We suspect that in the future a lot of money will go to the new member states but this doesn't necessarily mean the total amount of money will disappear. UK regional sources will fill some of the gaps. Under current proposals the INTERREG programmes will continue with significantly more money than presently available in Britain. Therefore Europe will continue to be an important funding source for our waterways both now and in the future and it is vital we continue to build strong relationships with our European partners.

Further information about these projects is available from our economic development team on + 44 (0) 1923 201163 or the following websites, www.trustpartners.org and www.canal-link.com

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF

Birmingham, the UK's second city, heart of the UK canal system, has all the makings of a perfect visitor destination. *Waterfront* went to the short-term moorings in the centre of Birmingham to see what boaters really think of bustling Brindley Place and going out in Gas Street.

BOBBING ALONG

The first people we meet are John and Susan Watwood who have decided that these moorings are a great base to explore the city.

Where are you heading on your journey?

"We've been on the Caldon Canal, then headed towards Worcester and Stourport."

Why have you chosen to stop here?

"There's absolutely everything on your doorstep. The city centre shops are a 10-minute walk from these moorings."

Where else along your journey would you recommend?

"There are so many great places to stop, like Stone. You could also make a visit to the Wedgwood Visitor Centre if you moor up in Great Haywood."

Is this your own boat?

"Yes, Bobtail is ours. It was John's dream to own a boat. He started off with a 20ft fibre-glass boat before Bobtail. On the boat it's a different world, everything is at a slower pace."

THEATRE TREATS

We move over the bridge to meet Gordon Brighton and his partner Lesley on their narrowboat 'Avimar'. Gordon started boating in 1976 and has owned a boat since 1983.

Where are you heading on your journey?

"We started off at Napton three days ago, and are heading to Autherley Junction," says Gordon.

Why have you chosen to stop here?

"It has been transformed. We always skipped through it until a few years ago. Now we like to moor right in the heart of Birmingham and take in a play. We really like the theatre here, and have a favourite tapas bar at the Mailbox."

Would you recommend boating holidays?

"It's a pleasure to come to the canals, it's very peaceful, not many boat movements, apart from when there are shows. There is a mixture of scenery, you can be in the middle of nowhere or a city, that is what is nice about boating," Gordon concludes.

SHORE-THING

We spot Shorelark, a 62ft narrowboat, as she moors up under the imposing shadows of the National Indoor Arena. Skipper of the boat, Rebecca Smith-Keary, invites us aboard for a chat along with her two sons Philip,14 and Tom,12.

So why are you in Birmingham?

"We've just travelled from Kidderminster to Birmingham. My husband works here so we do fun things during the day, whilst he's at work. We visited the National Sea Life Centre, and tomorrow we are going to Think Tank Museum."

How did you come to own a boat?

"We had hired and borrowed boats for years, and then decided to buy. Boating holidays are great for children. There's always things to do, and the boys enjoy opening the locks for us."

Any tips for other boaters?

"It's always best to check that you have the right keys before you set off. We have helped some people out who have followed other boats into locks without having a key, and then have been unable to get out at the other end."

A VISITOR MOORING

DOGS LIFE

A short walk along the towpath we meet Paul and Shirley Barrett from Shropshire, with their dogs Maple and Dragon.

Is this your own boat?

"Yes," Paul proudly replies, "I've had the boat for 20 years. 'Vester' is named after the working boat, Star Class and came from Tug No. 3 Stewart & Lloyds Coombeswood tug works, Halesowen." The boat has been lovingly restored back to her former glory and painted in original colours. Paul continues, "these are just nice boats to own."

Where are you heading?

Paul explains. "We plan to cruise to Dudley Museum tonight and stay there. We're heading down to the River Severn and then back home on the Shropshire Union."

Why have you chosen to stop here?

"We know the area well, and it has lots of appeal in terms of food and drinks." Shirley agrees, "Its so central, good for food and shopping, and free parking!" Paul adds, "they've started to retain the character of the place, some warehouses have been knocked down, but they're doing a better job of heritage now."

What tips would you pass on to other boaters?

"Get here early, by 5pm it's full. The moorings are good and are reasonably safe." says Shirley.

BIRTHDAY SHOPPING

Next we meet the Powell family, who have just moored their narrowboat, Lady C and are about to go shopping for their daughter's birthday present. The family is dad Rick, mum Melanie, and sisters Charlotte and Lydia. They use their boat as much as possible and have been cruising together for three years.

Where are you heading?

Rick summarises the family's itinerary, "we started at Shugborough, near Fradley where there was a three-day music festival at the Hall. We moored the boat near Kings Bromley, and plan to cruise the Stourport Ring, and go up the River Severn for a day to Worcester. Then return from Worcester, on the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, back to Birmingham."

Do you all have jobs to do on the boat?

Melanie describes the system, "the girls do locks, and dad drives, and coming up are 36 locks in a row."

Why have you chosen to stop in Birmingham?

Rick explains, "once you get here you're fine. It's great, with lots of security and cameras. It's good for the family, kids like to go shopping and the atmosphere here is lovely."

THE MAGNIFICENT EIGHT

Finally we meet a party of eight from Dorset, who are on day three of their hire-boat holiday. June and Dawn reveal, "this is our first narrowboat holiday, we've all had a go at steering. Soon as you've done it once, it's easy."

Where are you heading?

"The Stourport Ring. We started on Saturday afternoon, it's been good, bit of rain that was the only thing really. We were told we might get round if we go eight hours a day, but we are half way and its only Tuesday, so we're slowing down."

Why have you chosen to stop in Birmingham?

"Josh wants to go bowling, we want to shop and go to Cadbury's World and will stay for two nights. There have been a mix of places and this is the first time a stop has been busy."

Would you recommend boating holidays?

"I thought we were going to be bored, because we are very active people, but we haven't been bored at all. It has been quite varied, from out in the middle of nowhere, to concrete and then back to fields again. We would recommend it to other families and definitely do it again ourselves."

I to r: (back) Darren, Ryan, Josh, Julian, (front) June, Lyanne, Nicola, Dawn.

THIS IS MY PATCH...

The Kennet & Avon Canal, linking the Severn Estuary at Bristol to the River Thames at Reading, is one of the inland waterways' most impressive feats of engineering. Over 100 miles long, with more than 100 locks, all interspersed with beautiful countryside and historic towns and villages, it's no wonder that the Kennet & Avon Canal is a popular destination. *Waterfront's* Gill Owen took in some of the highlights and was given a range of recommendations of top spots to visit by waterway supervisor, George Meer.

MEET GEORGE

George, who is based at BW's Devizes office, is responsible for about 37 miles of the canal, from Hanham Lock on the River Avon, to Lock 50 at Devizes, as well as for 14 miles of the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal. George's team is 15-strong at the moment, and they are never short of work to do. Originally a carpenter on the Hartshill section of the Coventry Canal, George moved south to become a supervisor on the Kennet & Avon Canal, where he's been ever since. He has worked on the waterway through its restoration and regeneration and is now maintaining and improving what is an amazing stretch of canal. "I'm really quite passionate about my job," says George, "the waterways get into your blood and it becomes more than a job, it's a way of life."

FOXHANGERS FOOTBRIDGE TO BRADFORD-ON-AVON

George tells me, "If you want to cruise the whole canal it will take you well over a week. There's so much to see and do. In fact it's very hard to pick out just one area to talk about." George gives in and agrees to show me the highlights of just one section. "A good section to explore is from Foxhangers footbridge to Bradford-on-Avon. There's a bit of everything along that section, but before that I have to tell you about Caen Hill Locks."

THE GIANT'S BACKBONE

Caen Hill Locks are an impressive mark on the landscape, sometimes called 'The Giant's Backbone'. Twenty-nine locks enable boats to move 237ft up and down hill. "It takes the average boat about six hours to complete the section and boaters operate the locks themselves, although our lockkeepers are always happy to give advice and help out." says George. "There are summer and winter opening times for the section of locks 44–29, so it's best to check up before you set off on your journey. The locks are a real piece of working heritage, as well as a bit of a challenge and they are a great sight to see, even if you don't want to move your boat up or down them."

WACKY CIDER

The first stop on George's recommended route heading west, is Seend Flight, which has five locks, and is the sight of an old ironworks. "There's an interpretation board that explains how the iron ore was transported. But best of all there's some good pubs in the area. There's the Barge Inn on the canal, or if you want to wander into the village you could visit the Brewery Inn and order a pint of 'Wacky' – local cider that's definitely worth trying." George also lets me know that there are pump-out facilities, water and rubbish disposal here. "There are signs letting you know how many cruising hours it is until the next rubbish disposal. We try to make all information available to our visitors to make their journeys as enjoyable as possible."

SEMINGTON

Our next stop is at Semington, which is where the entrance to the Wiltshire & Berkshire Canal used to be. There are plenty of visitor moorings and the landscape from here towards Bradford-on-Avon is very picturesque. "I really recommend this area, it's very pretty and there's plenty of wildlife to try and spot including kingfishers and water voles. The towpath is good for cycling and walking, and I think the fishing is great too – but you have to get a local licence."

Every boater needs provisions and maintenance equipment, and George informs me of some useful places along this stretch, "there are two large marinas, Hilperton and Bradford, both with chandleries should you need anything on your journey."

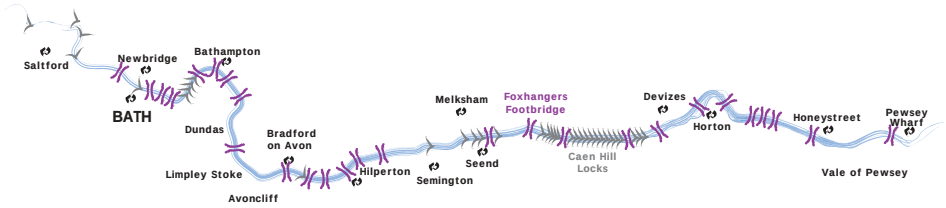
The last place to stop that George recommends is Bradford-on-Avon itself. "It's a fantastic place, with plenty to do. There are nooks and crannies and back-streets to investigate. And if you enjoy hunting around antique shops then there's a whole host of shops for you to enjoy." Home to the busiest lock on the section, it seems that no matter when you come to Bradford-on-Avon, it will be busy with boaters. George explains how he works with a range of people in his role, in particular the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust. "The Kennet & Avon Canal Trust shop and tea-room is based at the lock, so you can have a cake without feeling guilty - you are supporting the canal after all! And you can have a look at the new interpretation board which explains the history of the area."

THE FAMOUS BOATMAN'S BREAKFAST

We walk further along the towpath towards the Tithe Barn, which is owned by English Heritage, and home of the town's visitor centre. As we wander George explains, "there is a challenge here in Bradford that's on a par with completing Caen Hill. The 'famous Boatman's Breakfast' served at The Lock Inn. It's huge, it's massive – but of course I've finished it."

There is loads to do on the Kennet & Avon Canal and George had to be pushed to select just a few places to show me, for fear of missing other top spots. There's plenty of information available on waterscape.com or alternatively you can contact the South West Waterway Office on 01452 318000.

KENNET & AVON CANAL



Kennet & Avon Canal Trust
Wharf Cottage 15 Frome Road
Bradford-on-Avon Wiltshire BA15 1LE
www.katrust.org.uk
T 01225 868683

The Barge Inn
Seend Cleeve Seend Melksham Wiltshire
SN12 6QB
T 01380 828230

The Brewery Inn
Seend Cleeve Melksham
Wiltshire SN12 6PX
T 01380 828463

Lock Inn Café
48 Frome Road Bradford-on-Avon Wiltshire
BA15 1LE
T 01225 868068
E dick@thelockinn.co.uk

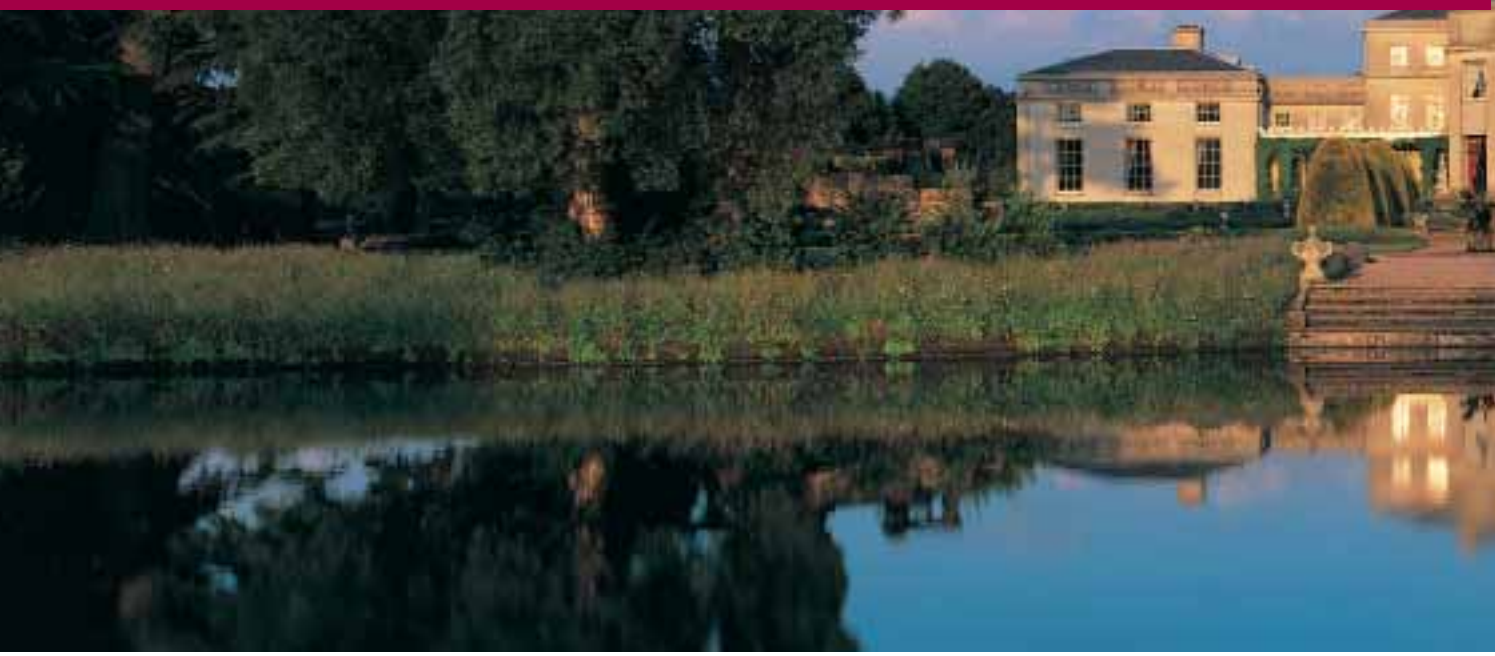
Hilperton Marina
Hilperton Wharf Hammond Way Trowbridge
Wiltshire
T 01225 765243

Bradford-on-Avon Marina
Trowbridge Road Bradford-on-Avon Wiltshire
T 01225 864562

Opening times of locks can be checked on waterscape.com through the stoppages & restrictions pages in the boating section or by calling the local BW office
T 01452 318000

Top: Bradford Wharf, Bradford-on-Avon
Above: Caen Hill Flight, Devizes

A WHOLE HOST OF HERITAGE



I'm sure plenty of readers will agree that part of the charm of boating is the amazing heritage sites that you can pass by and marvel at from your boat. But did you know that some of Britain's most impressive historical highlights are situated just beyond the towpath? Waterscape.com, the online guide to all things water related, has researched and recorded a wide range of these historical gems. I decided to put their website to the test and see if they really could advise me on some excursions with more than a hint of heritage that can be easily accessed from the towpath.

Top: Shugborough Hall (courtesy of NTPL/Nick Meers) Above: Rufford Old Hall (courtesy of NTPL/Matthew Antrobus)

By going to the directory pages on Waterscape.com I searched all of the inland waterways using the 'historic building' category. When the system finished searching, it returned with plenty of ideas. Definitely a result, and as they are ordered by waterway it's really easy to plan your own day trip from the canal or river of your choice. I've selected just a few of their ideas, which cover the whole inland waterway network.

SAUNTER TO SHUGBOROUGH

The grounds of Shugborough Hall, home of Lord Lichfield, run to the towpath of the Trent & Mersey Canal. So you can moor up and within a matter of minutes be immersed in the fascinating history of Shugborough. The hall is a beautiful neo-classical house that stands over the valley of the Trent. The house was built in the late 17th Century and enlarged in the 1750s and again in the 19th Century. There are events for the public, including craft days and music festivals throughout the year. The National Trust owns Shugborough Hall, and Waterscape.com lists all of the opening times and admission fees, as well as providing a helpful map to get from your boat right to the entrance gate.

FANTASTIC FACTS ON THE FOSSDYKE

Built by the Romans, the Fossdyke Navigation, , at just 11 miles long, manages to pack in some history along the way, with the pinnacle of the heritage highlights being Lincoln Castle, just a short walk from the Navigation. In 1068, two years after the Battle of Hastings, William the Conqueror began building Lincoln Castle on a site occupied since Roman times. It was the focus of many battles in the ensuing centuries, but for the past 900 years it has been used as a court and prison - its Crown Court function continuing today. Many original features still remain and the wall walks provide visitors with magnificent views of the Cathedral, the City of Lincoln and the surrounding countryside. Waterscape.com provides telephone and internet contacts for the castle so you can always check on opening times for when you're cruising in that area.

MEANDER TO MEDIEVAL GAINSBOROUGH

The River Trent passes through the Lincolnshire town of Gainsborough. Just beyond the river bank is Gainsborough Old Hall, a large timber-framed medieval house dating back to the 15th century. Originally

a 13th Century manor house stood in its place, none of which remains today. Its main attractions are its magnificent Great Hall and strong brick tower. Famous guests include King Richard III in 1483 and King Henry VIII in 1541. Waterscape.com notes that this property is an English Heritage site, so if you need further information you could always have a look on their website too.

LEARNING ON THE LLANGOLLEN

If you feel like learning a little history whilst cruising the Llangollen, and the Pontcysyllte and Chirk Aqueducts haven't done enough to fulfil your heritage hunger, then just a short walk through woodland, or alternatively a stroll up the road from the Llangollen Canal near Llantysilio, lies Valle Crucis Abbey. The Abbey was home to Cistercian monks when founded in 1201. Henry VIII put an end to the monasteries in the 16th Century and the building fell into decay. However, today you can still see many original features which have survived, like the west front and its rose window, the east end of the Abbey and the Chapter House with its rib-vaulted roof. A visit to Valle Crucis Abbey gives you an interesting insight into the Cistercian order, as well as the beauty of its stunning backdrop of the Llangollen mountains. Waterscape.com provides an easy location map that also shows the pubs in the area, so you can plan to the last detail including where to eat and drink.

RUSTIC RUFFORD

Rufford Old Hall is considered to be one of Lancashire's finest 16th Century buildings and the Rufford Branch of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal virtually runs right by the front door. Home to the Heskith family for over 400 years the building shows the family's wealth and position. The Great Hall is magnificent and was built to be admired. It has a very rare feature - an elaborately carved movable wooden screen, separating the hall from the kitchen at the eastern end. It is also believed that William Shakespeare performed in the hall for Sir Thomas Heskith. Waterscape.com gives many more details of the hall's historical background as well as useful information such as the fact that there are refreshments available at this site.

OLD ALE AT AYLESBURY

The King's Head in Aylesbury is a short walk from the canal. The historic coaching inn has been serving and entertaining the public for more than 500 years. Fully restored and still attracting a loyal customer base, the King's Head occupies a central position off Market Square in Aylesbury. Architectural features such as exposed timber framing, a cobbled courtyard and the original stable block add to the period charm. An award winning ale or glass of fine wine in the medieval bar frequented by both gentlemen and highwaymen in 1455 is a great way to end your day of cruising. Waterscape.com highlights that tours at this historic watering-hole are available via the National Trust and even provide a link to their site.

So along with Waterscape.com's journey planner you can now plan day trips too, the perfect partner to a day out.

Waterscape.com are constantly updating their website so make sure you take a look and see what's new at the moment.

waterscape.com

Shortcuts

VIKING WONDERS

From Viking longboats to narrowboats, Dave Smith, team supervisor on the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal, has a real interest in the waterways. "After I was made redundant as a miner I had a change of direction. I moved to Cambridge and ended up living on the River Cam. I decided I wanted to have something to do with the water permanently."

Dave moved around the country, gaining skills to make him a candidate for a job with BW. "I retrained as a bricklayer, and I've had training on how to complete construction using special heritage techniques."

Dave has a varied role, he explains, "I work with a great team. We undertake towpath maintenance and stoppage works. I also manage the budget for our length of the canal and carry out risk assessments."

Dave is now living back on dry land, but still enjoys seeing other parts of the network. "It's good to visit other areas, if I'm not on my patch I can relax more! I enjoy being outdoors and meeting people who are doing something they love – boating."

Boating is something Dave has a real passion for, along with heritage construction, and he managed to combine the two by helping to restore a Viking longboat replica. "We've taken the boat to the Jorvik Festival, been filmed for Sky TV and sailed it up the River Thames as part of the VJ Day celebrations."

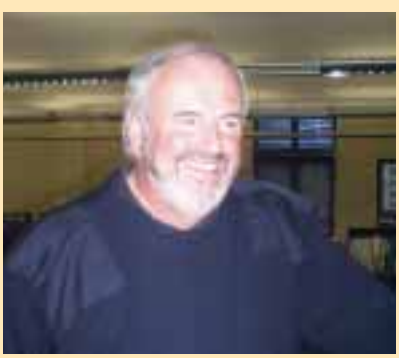
SCAN-TASTIC

Laurie Waterhouse plays an important, if not slightly unusual role in the maintenance of BW's network of canals and rivers. Laurie is the hydrographic survey team leader, and his own invention, GeoScaN, has put BW at the forefront of the hydrographic surveying field. You might see Laurie out and about, with the highly sophisticated system, on a waterway near you. "I'm on the waterways with my team quite a lot," explains Laurie, "in the last four weeks I've been on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal, the River Ribble, River Trent and now I'm on the Grand Union Canal at Napton."

"GeoScaN means we can pass down a stretch of water just once and collect all the data we need." Previously this would have needed to be done by three or four teams, so it's a far more cost effective and efficient method for BW. "It's environmentally friendly too," says Laurie, "as it's far less invasive than previous methods."

Laurie has worked for BW for 30 years, previously in water management. "My initial interest in the waterways was through canal boat holidays with my friends. It's really changed, when we first started you could cruise through Birmingham and not see another boat – the canals were still thought of as an industrial tool." Laurie adds, "I really enjoy the outdoor life and this job means I get to go out and about."

The system records information using a computer and digital video, giving a profile of the canal bed, showing the condition of the bank, vegetation and even towpath furniture. "The information we find is then passed on to engineers and waterway staff so that they can carry out works."



The surveying system can also be used on roads and railways, "we can generate income by working for third parties too."

LIFE AT THE LOCK

Being a lock keeper is a 24-hour job, and Wally Wright, lock keeper at Atherstone Flight on the Coventry Canal wouldn't swap it for the world. "It's a great job," says Wally.

After 22 years on the waterways Wally is still as keen as ever. Born by the canal he started working for BW as a lengthsman on the Coventry Canal, and since then has also been a leading canalman and part of a piling gang.

He's a big nature lover, with his own collection of birds and animals, as well as an impressive array of plants and flowers that surround the lock keeper's cottage he and his family live in. "We grow all the plants ourselves to use around the locks. This year we are proud to have won the BW Lock & Bridge Competition."

"A big part of my job is working with boaters, helping people through the locks, explaining about the canals to passers-by

MOORINGS AND MORE

From city-slickers to sight-seeing tourists, Robyn Nielsen, moorings co-ordinator, London, meets all sorts of boaters. "There are 13 mooring sites in central London, from Kensal Green to Limehouse Basin, plus visitor moorings. Here at Limehouse I can be talking to sailing fanatics who attempt round-the-world records or I can be chatting to a retired couple who want to cruise London on their narrowboat."

Robyn, a self-confessed 'yachtie', started working for BW four years ago as a waterway operative. "I'd previously worked with American tourists in London and decided that I wanted to do something water-based. I was on the bank for a year before I 'came in from the cold' as the moorings administrator, and now I'm the co-ordinator based in the Limehouse Marina office." Robyn's role involves liasing with patrol officers and lock keepers, updating the maintenance teams, managing contractors and advising boaters of moorings that are available.

"Everyday is different, and at the moment I'm managing Limehouse Marina too. The marina is always busy but it's an oasis of calm in the centre of London. We have rallies, overseas visitors and special busy periods, such as throughout the London Boat Show or over Bank Holiday weekends."

Getting a mooring in London is quite a task, "at the moment there is a very long waiting list, once people get a mooring they don't want to move. My advice to boaters would always be to sort out what you are going to do about mooring before you buy a boat or move to the London area."

CALL ON ME

If you've got a problem then customer services advisor Jean Hicks will be happy to help. Jean's relatively new to BW, but as an experienced boater she has a wealth of knowledge.

"I come from a sea boating background," explains Jean, "but some years ago I discovered the canal system. I didn't know much about the inland waterways but my fascination with them began in London and now, especially through working at BW, I've learnt so much more about the system."

Jean has lived on a boat for seven years and at the moment has a 1937 historic work boat. "I enjoy the social aspect of living on the waterways, it's a great community spirit." A large amount of Jean's time is spent talking to boaters or potential new boaters. With a background of customer service work already, Jean leapt at the chance to join the BW team. "I wanted to do something that I felt strongly about, now I get to talk about boats and the waterways all day. It's like an extension of home." Never knowing what the next call is going to be is part of the appeal for Jean, "I can be helping a customer, discussing licences and moorings or advising someone who is considering buying a boat."

Being part of an enthusiastic team is important, "It's up to all of us to ensure that our customers get the service they deserve, and that's what our aim is."

and ensuring everyone is safe. Our door is always open to anyone who needs us." His advice is, "Take your time – it's much safer if you go at your own pace and don't rush, especially going through the locks."

Wally gets involved in all sorts of projects. And they are pretty wide-ranging, from taking groups of children on guided walks with the Country Trust, to helping out the Fire Service and the RSPCA rescue a deer from the canal. "There's always something to do or someone to talk to, I wouldn't do anything else."

Wally is realistic too, "not everyone understands and appreciates the waterways. I've been up at 3.30am ensuring that everything is ok and there is water in the canal after vandals have tried to empty the locks." But this doesn't deter him, in fact he's turned the problem into a new project. By working with the police and other local groups Wally has been influential in developing a canoeing scheme to actively involve young people, "now there's something for everyone to enjoy," he says.

Letters

Dear Editor

Hello British Waterways, is there anyone there? I needed help but didn't seem able to make contact. People were attempting to get into my boat, I was 'home alone', it was dark and I was scared. I was moored at what was, in the past, a safe and peaceful mooring.

Each year I seem to pay more for the privilege of using our waterways but get less for my money. Perhaps it is that a shortage of staff has led to BW employees being co-opted for property development and that the primary duty of maintaining our waterways, and the safety of those who pay to use them has been forgotten in the scramble for profit that few of us seem to benefit from? In the gentler past we had lock keepers, a friendly face, someone to help in an emergency, now, despite the increasing and worrying violence of 'Yob Culture' that has sadly extended to the waterways we are left very much on our own.

Pam Pickett, Nottingham (by email)

Yes, there is someone here, don't worry! In fact there are around 2,000 of us working for the canal network, whether that be bankside or in the offices, each with the objective of extending access to the network and protecting this valuable resource. But even if every BW employee was on the bankside, that would only be one every mile or so, and clearly we need people such as accountants, clerical staff and the like to ensure BW's wide ranging business continues to function and provides money for investment back into the maintenance of the network.

I'm sorry to hear you had problems with someone trying to intimidate you when you were 'home alone'. I'm not sure we could have done anything immediately, but you should always let the police know of incidents such as these. Without accurate records which can develop into patterns of intimidation and harassment, the police may not realise the frequency and seriousness of your own situation. I'm sure if one of our people, or even a third party had been passing by, they would have stopped and intervened.

I hope this helps and you enjoy your boating throughout the year.

Eugene Baston, customer relations manager

Dear Editor

The news item on the BW licence fee update on page 2 of the Spring/Summer 2004 edition of *Waterfront* gives the impression that the new price index mechanism was agreed by user groups after consultation. The fact is that all groups voiced the view that the index used should be RPI (Retail Price Indices) with an allowance for increased efficiency.

Perhaps you can issue a clarification in the next issue of the magazine?

Malcolm Wood, *Communications Officer, Association of Waterway Cruising Clubs*

The indexing of licence fees was included in the major review of our craft licence fee structure during 2002/03. The results of the review were published in February 2003 and I quote below from page 6 of 'Craft Licensing Updates' that we sent to all licence holders.

"On the question of replacing RPI with a composite index, opinion was widely varied. Some argued for retaining RPI because it is simple and well understood. Overall however, none of the arguments changed our view that the index should reflect BW's actual costs.

Having accepted the principle that an index other than RPI should be used, we would like to take a little more time to review some of the interesting models suggested by user groups. We will publish our conclusions as soon as we can."

We consulted with independent economics consultancy, Oxera, who helped us to refine the cost based index. We published this conclusion in our Annual Report & Accounts 2002/03 (page 16).

Licence fees are now adjusted in April each year using a composite index that reflects economy-wide changes that affect BW. It recognises that BW total costs are made up of expenditure on major works (approx. 52%), staff costs (25%) and expenditure on services (23%). Accordingly we take the government's published price indices for construction, whole economy average earnings and the corporate services price index, and weight them by the relevant share of costs to derive the composite index. We then apply a discount of 0.5% to reflect improvements we should be continuously making in efficiency.

At the time of writing, we are collating the necessary statistics for presentation to the BW Board and will announce in November the new rate to take effect from April 2005.

Sally Ash, marketing manager

Please send letters to:
The Editor, *Waterfront* Magazine, British Waterways,
Willow Grange, Church Road, Watford WD17 4QA
Email: waterfront@britishwaterways.co.uk

Dear Editor

We are fairly new to boating but have been caravanners for 50 years and have been noting the contrast between the two pastimes.

Our 22-foot cabin cruiser costs around twice as much to legally use on the canals and rivers, as our 36-foot towing vehicle/caravan rig costs to use on the thousands of miles of roads in Britain.

When caravanning we do not expect to encounter freezer units, tree trunks and branches, wooden boxes, plastic bags and containers and various other debris in our path - if we did there would quickly be a complaint against the highways authority, possibly even a legal action.

So my question is this: why cannot British Waterways keep their waters cleaner and less risky to boaters who pay quite a lot of money for the privilege of using them?

A Vallen

I'm sorry that you've encountered these objects floating in our waterways. Unfortunately it is still the case, despite a big improvement in the public's perception of the waterways, that some people think it acceptable to dump items such as these in our canals. Informing the local waterway office of the exact location means that we can arrange for their retrieval.

BW works very hard to keep the waterway environment clear of rubbish by providing litter bins and special dog bins, however not everybody uses these facilities and when rubbish does blows into the water it becomes a lot harder to remove.

We clear rubbish from our canals on a regular basis. For example, in the last year West Midlands Waterways spent £30,000 on rubbish sweeps, £90,000 on clearing floating rubbish and also work with the Probation Service to facilitate further rubbish sweeps carried out by offenders. We do however have limited resources to look after our 2,000-mile network of waterways, and are not always aware of, or are able to clear, floating rubbish immediately.

Eugene Baston, customer relations manager

Dear Editor

We have our boat moored on the Stratford Canal, with the popularity of this canal comes the associated waste. Many companies have facilities for waste to be placed into differing streams. i.e paper, plastic, metal, batteries and general waste. Looking at the contents of our local BW waste containers the contents generally consist of 40% of easily recyclable materials. The advantages are numerous, if BW adopted recycling facilities, such as those found at supermarket car parks.

Dave & Jackie Bird (by email)

Thank you for raising the important matter of recycling facilities for BW customers. As part of BW's Sustainability Action Plan we are exploring the scope for a number of pilot recycling schemes for visitor waste. There are a number of potential problems to be resolved particularly arranging collection and difficult road access to some sites, but BW intends to have a number of schemes up and running during the coming year. For example, South East Waterways will be trialing a recycling site at Market Harborough Basin. Whilst Central Shires Waterways, which cover the Stratford Canal, are also currently in discussion with their local authorities to find a suitable site to trial.

Jim Langridge, senior sustainability adviser

Dear Editor

Re: Display your licence – You've got it, so flaunt it

I am one of the offending boaters who does not display the horrid piece of blue paper in my beautiful boat window. It is hard enough to stick the licence to the window, but after a winter at Dochgarroch on the Caledonian Canal it looks like an inferior piece of blotting paper – hanging soaked and smudged. Gone are the days when you received a sticky plastic disc that could be displayed each year with pride or even the motor-tax type disc that could be inserted each year without offence.

Jim McCulloch

Thank you for your comments. In April 2003 licence discs changed to the new square shape, with the introduction of our new computer system, and all licence holders should have received a plastic disc holder at the time. We have now sent you two new plastic holders, and further replacements are available on request from our Customer Service Centre on 01923 201120.

BW is committed to tackling licence evasion, and will crack down on all boats not displaying a licence. So remember – display your licence today and help BW concentrate its efforts on the real licence evasion culprits.

Failure to display a valid licence is a violation of BW's byelaws and can lead to legal action being taken.

Sally Ash, marketing manager

The Editor reserves the right to shorten or modify any letters submitted.

The Inland Waterways Association

Working for all who care about Britain's unique waterways heritage

Harry Arnold - Waterway Images

IWA's Waterway Recovery Group volunteers at work at Aston on the Montgomery canal

The re-opening of Hanbury locks, Droitwich Canal

The Inland Waterways Association is always hard at work for everyone to ensure that our rivers and canals and their surroundings are conserved and maintained in the best possible condition and developed sensibly to suit future needs. We lobby the authorities to change attitudes and policies, take part in consultation, organise manpower for projects, raise funds and give financial aid. We work with navigation authorities to improve facilities and services.

With substantial help from IWA, many more miles of long-derelict canals are now being brought back to life. To do so provides employment and wide-ranging leisure facilities ... but politicians and planners have to be persuaded ... the huge costs of restoration and future maintenance has to be secured ... and ever present are the threats to old canal routes from the conflicting needs for highway and building development.

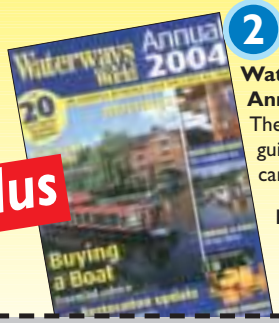
Restoration of the Kennet & Avon and Rochdale Canals, a major part of the Montgomery and the Anderton Boat Lift are just some of the projects recently completed. Funding from many sources is being secured for others - including the Cotswold Canals, the waterways of East London and the Lichfield & Hatherton. The Inland Waterways Association is assisting every one of these with financial aid and the efforts of more than a thousand volunteer workers (including IWA's branch members and Waterway Recovery Group) to provide skills and resources.

Your Membership support would add enormously to the weight of IWA's ongoing Campaign and enable more waterway restoration and improvements to be completed. And through the thirty-six IWA branches, there are endless opportunities to get involved in restoration work, local waterways issues, events ... and much more.

Free! when you join

1 **IWA Waterways Magazine** four times a year

plus



2 **Waterways World Annual 2004** The comprehensive guide to Britain's canals & rivers

3 **Lockmaster Map** of principal inland navigations of England & Wales

Extra 3 months membership The first 15 months membership for the price of 12 - if you make your future Subscription payments by Direct Debit

Offers subject to availability. Later editions, or other publications of similar value, will be substituted if necessary.

To join

- *just complete the Membership Application*
- *telephone the IWA Credit Card Hotline 01923 711114*
- *visit www.waterways.org.uk and join on-line.*

Comprehensive range of waterways books, maps, guides, videos and useful merchandise available by mail order.

A non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee.
Registered in England No: 612245. Registered as a charity No: 212342
Registered Office: 3 Norfolk Court, Norfolk Road, Rickmansworth, WD3 1LT

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Annual Subscription (please tick): Single £22.50 ☐ Family £28 ☐

Concessionary Rates: OVER 60 years of age - Single £16.50 ☐ Joint £17.50 ☐ Under 26 - £16 ☐

☐ I enclose a cheque £_____ (payable to The Inland Waterways Association) **OR**

☐ Please debit my Visa/Mastercard/ Switch/Delta Card Number: ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐

Start Date ___/___ Expiry Date ___/___ Issue Number (Switch) ____

☐ Please send me a form so that I can make my future subscription payments by Bank/Building Society Account Direct Debit **and receive the first 15 months Membership for the price of 12.**

Signature _____ Date _____

Name (1) Mr/Mrs/Miss _____ (2) Mr/Mrs/Miss _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Telephone _____ e mail _____

Send to: The Inland Waterways Association - Membership, FREEPOST NW2944, PO Box 114 Rickmansworth WD3 1WD